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Page 2Amendments to the Claims:

1-16. (Cancelled)

17. (Previously presented) A fiber bundle comprising a plurality of bulked drawn plastically deformed non-elastomeric microfilaments substantially surrounding and covering from view in an unstretched condition a plurality of elastomeric microfilaments that are shorter than and less bulky than said non-elastomeric microfilaments, said elastomeric and non-elastomeric microfilaments originating from a common multicomponent fiber having elastomeric and non-elastomeric components, wherein said elastomeric polymer has a solubility parameter (δ) sufficiently different from said non-elastomeric polymer so that said elastomeric component and said non-elastomeric component split upon thermal activation and further wherein the weight ratio of the non-elastomeric microfilaments within the fiber bundle is substantially identical to the weight ratio of the non-elastomeric component within the multicomponent fiber.

18. (Original) The fiber bundle of Claim 17, wherein said elastomeric polymer and said non-elastomeric polymer have a difference in solubility parameters (δ) of at least about 1.2 $(\text{J}/\text{cm}^3)^{1/2}$.

19. (Original) The fiber bundle of Claim 18, wherein said elastomeric polymer and said non-elastomeric polymer have a difference in solubility parameters (δ) of at least about 2.9 $(\text{J}/\text{cm}^3)^{1/2}$.

20. (Original) The fiber bundle of Claim 17, wherein each of said non-elastomeric microfilaments has a random series of substantially non-linear configurations.

21. (Original) The fiber bundle of Claim 17, wherein said elastomeric microfilaments are substantially non-bulked.

22. (Cancelled)

23. (Original) The fiber bundle of Claim 17, wherein said microfilaments have an average size ranging from about 0.05 to about 1.5 denier.

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24. (Previously presented) The fiber bundle of Claim 17, wherein said fiber bundle comprises a total of about 8 to about 48 microfilaments.

25. (Original) The fiber bundle of Claim 17, wherein said fiber bundle is in the form of staple fiber.

26. (Cancelled)

27. (Currently amended) The fiber bundle of Claim + 17, wherein said non-elastomeric microfilaments and said elastomeric microfilaments are different colors, and wherein said fiber bundle is the color of the non-elastomeric microfilaments in its non-stretched condition and said fiber bundle is the color of the elastomeric microfilaments in its stretched condition.

28-29. (Cancelled)

30. (Previously presented) A fabric comprising a plurality of drawn bulked plastically deformed non-elastomeric microfilaments substantially surrounding and covering from view in an unstretched condition a plurality of elastomeric microfilaments that are shorter than and less bulky than said non-elastomeric microfilaments, said elastomeric and non-elastomeric microfilaments originating from a common multicomponent fiber having elastomeric and non-elastomeric components, wherein said elastomeric polymer has a solubility parameter (δ) sufficiently different from said non-elastomeric polymer so that said elastomeric component and said non-elastomeric component split upon thermal activation and further wherein the weight ratio of the non-elastomeric microfilaments within the fiber bundle is substantially identical to the weight ratio of the non-elastomeric component within the multicomponent fiber.

31. (Original) The fabric of Claim 30, wherein said fabric is selected from the group consisting of nonwoven fabrics, woven fabrics, and knit fabrics.

32. (Previously presented) A product comprising the fabric of Claim 30, selected from the group consisting of synthetic suede and filtration media.

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33. (Original) The product of Claim 32, wherein said product is synthetic suede.

34-47. (Cancelled)

48. (Previously presented) A drawn splittable multicomponent fiber comprising:
at least one component comprising an elastomeric polymer, at least a portion of which is exposed to the outer peripheral surface of said fiber, which is elastically deformed so that said elastomeric component is capable of substantially complete recovery to its original length upon release of drawing tension; and

at least one component comprising a non-elastomeric polymer, at least a portion of which is exposed to the outer peripheral surface of said fiber, which is plastically deformed and longer than said elastomeric component upon dissociation therefrom so that said non-elastomeric component maintains substantially its same length after drawing upon release of drawing tension,

wherein said elastomeric polymer has a solubility parameter (δ) sufficiently different from said non-elastomeric polymer so that said elastomeric component and said non-elastomeric component split upon thermal treatment and said elastomeric and non-elastomeric polymer components are arranged in distinct unocclusive cross-sectional segments so that the polymer components are not physically impeded from being separated from one another.

49. (Original) The fiber of Claim 48, wherein said elastomeric polymer and said non-elastomeric polymer have a difference in solubility parameters (δ) of at least about $1.2 \text{ (J/cm}^3)^{1/2}$.

50. (Original) The fiber of Claim 49, wherein said elastomeric polymer and said non-elastomeric polymer have a difference in solubility parameters (δ) of at least about $2.9 \text{ (J/cm}^3)^{1/2}$.

51. (Original) The fiber of Claim 48, wherein said elastomeric polymer is selected from the group consisting of polyurethane elastomers, ethylene-polybutylene copolymers, poly(ethylene-butylene)polystyrene block copolymers, polyadipate esters, polyester elastomeric polymers, polyamide elastomeric polymers, polyetherester elastomeric polymers, ABA triblock or radial block copolymers, and mixtures thereof.

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52. (Original) The fiber of Claim 51, wherein said elastomeric polymer is polyurethane.

53. (Original) The fiber of Claim 48, wherein said non-elastomeric polymer is selected from the group consisting of polyolefins, polyesters, polyamides, and copolymers and mixtures thereof.

54. (Original) The fiber of Claim 53, wherein said non-elastomeric polymer is a polyolefin.

55. (Original) The fiber of Claim 54, wherein said polyolefin is polypropylene.

56. (Previously presented) The fiber of Claim 48, wherein said fiber is a pie/wedge fiber.

57. (Original) The fiber of Claim 48, wherein the weight ratio of said elastomeric polymer component to said non-elastomeric polymer component ranges from about 80/20 to about 20/80.

58. (Original) The fiber of Claim 48, wherein said fiber is selected from the group consisting of continuous filaments and staple fibers.

59. (Previously presented) A fabric comprising a plurality of drawn splittable multicomponent fibers comprising at least one component comprising a non-elastomeric polymer and at least one component comprising an elastomeric polymer, wherein at least a portion of each of said non-elastomeric and elastomeric polymer components is exposed to the outer peripheral surface of said fiber, wherein said at least one polymer component comprising a non-elastomeric polymer is plastically deformed and longer than said elastomeric component upon dissociation therefrom so that said non-elastomeric component maintains substantially its same length after drawing upon release of drawing tension and wherein said at least one polymer component comprising an elastomeric polymer is elastically deformed so that said elastomeric

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component is capable of substantially complete recovery to its original length upon release of drawing tension and release of adhesion to the non-elastomeric component; wherein said elastomeric polymer has a solubility parameter (δ) sufficiently different from said non-elastomeric polymer so that said elastomeric component and said non-elastomeric component split upon thermal activation and said elastomeric and non-elastomeric polymer components are arranged in distinct unocclusive cross-sectional segments so that the polymer components are not physically impeded from being separated from one another.

60-63. (Cancelled)

64. (Previously presented) A fiber bundle comprising a plurality of drawn bulked plastically deformed non-elastomeric microfilaments substantially surrounding and covering from view in an unstretched condition a plurality of elastomeric microfilaments that are shorter than and less bulky than said non-elastomeric microfilaments, said elastomeric and non-elastomeric microfilaments originating from a common multicomponent fiber having elastomeric and non-elastomeric components, wherein said elastomeric polymer has a solubility parameter (δ) sufficiently different from said non-elastomeric polymer so that said elastomeric component and said non-elastomeric component split upon thermal activation and further wherein said elastomeric microfilaments have substantially the same denier as said non-elastomeric microfilaments.

65-66. (Cancelled)

67. (Previously presented) The fiber bundle of Claim 17, wherein the number of elastomeric microfilaments is the same as the number of non-elastomeric microfilaments.

68. (Previously presented) The fiber bundle of Claim 17, wherein said elastomeric microfilaments and said non-elastomeric microfilaments have substantially the same denier.

69-70. (Cancelled)

71. (Previously presented) The fabric of Claim 30, wherein the number of elastomeric microfilaments is the same as the number of non-elastomeric microfilaments.

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72. (Previously presented) The fabric of Claim 30, wherein said elastomeric microfilaments and said non-elastomeric microfilaments have substantially the same denier.

73. (Previously presented) The fiber of Claim 48, wherein the number of elastomeric components is the same as the number of non-elastomeric components.

74. (Previously presented) The fiber of Claim 48, wherein the weight ratio of said component comprising an elastomeric polymer is the same as the weight ratio of said component comprising a non-elastomeric polymer.

75. (Previously presented) The fiber of Claim 48, wherein said fiber is a segmented round fiber comprising a plurality of polymer components comprising an elastomeric polymer alternating with a plurality of polymer components comprising a non-elastomeric polymer.

76. (Previously presented) The fiber of Claim 48, wherein said fiber is a segmented oval fiber comprising a plurality of polymer components comprising an elastomeric polymer alternating with a plurality of polymer components comprising a non-elastomeric polymer.

77. (Previously presented) The fiber of Claim 48, wherein said fiber is a segmented rectangular fiber comprising a plurality of polymer components comprising an elastomeric polymer alternating with a plurality of polymer components comprising a non-elastomeric polymer.

78. (Previously presented) The fiber of Claim 48, wherein said fiber is a segmented ribbon fiber.

79. (Previously presented) The fiber of Claim 48, wherein said fiber is a segmented multilobal fiber.

80. (Previously presented) The fiber of Claim 79, wherein said segmented multilobal fiber comprises at least three arms formed of said non-elastomeric polymer extending outwardly from a central region of said fiber formed of said elastomeric polymer.

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81. (Previously presented) The fiber of Claim 79, wherein said fiber has a cross sectional configuration.

82. (Previously presented) The fabric of Claim 59, wherein the number of elastomeric components is the same as the number of non-elastomeric components.

83. (Previously presented) The fabric of Claim 59, wherein the weight ratio of said component comprising an elastomeric polymer is the same as the weight ratio of said component comprising a non-elastomeric polymer.

84-85. (Cancelled)

86. (Previously presented) The fiber bundle of Claim 64, wherein the number of elastomeric microfilaments is the same as the number of non-elastomeric microfilaments.

87-88. (Cancelled)

89. (Previously presented) The fiber bundle of Claim 17, wherein said non-elastomeric microfilaments and said elastomeric microfilaments have a substantially triangular cross section.

Please add the following new claims:

90. (New) The fiber bundle of Claim 17, wherein said non-elastomeric microfilaments are drawn without heat.

91. (New) The fabric of Claim 30, wherein said non-elastomeric microfilaments are drawn without heat.

92. (New) The fiber of Claim 48, wherein said fiber is drawn without heat.

93. (New) The fabric of Claim 59, wherein said fiber is drawn without heat.

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94. (New) The fiber bundle of Claim 64, wherein said non-elastomeric microfilaments are drawn without heat.

95. (New) The fiber of Claim 48, wherein said fiber is mechanically drawn.

96. (New) The fabric of Claim 59, wherein said fiber is mechanically drawn.